

Minutes of FEC-9
November 8, 2006, 8:30-10:00 a.m.
Government Conference Room

Present: Tim Burns, Dan Curley (scribe), Jennifer Delton, Mark Huibregste, Bill Lewis, Mehmet Odekon, Paty Rubio

Absent: Lisa Aronson, Dan Hurwitz

1. Minutes of October 25, 2006.

Approval deferred due to technical difficulties with email.

2. IPPC Report.

Under item 5 of Mark's report, distributed previously, Tim asked the group whether or not we had formally recommended as FEC that (as reported in Tim's minutes) "a task force on space allocation be formed by IPPC, with faculty and student representation." Dan C. said that he remembered the term "task force" being used, but does not remember a formal recommendation. Bill read from the (approved) IPPC minutes of October 20:

Members familiar with a previously constituted Space Task Force suggested that the group should be reconstituted. Possible work could include capturing class space within existing buildings, considering reconfiguration of existing class (and other) spaces, and review of who controls existing academic spaces. It was suggested that the President's Cabinet review the matter and return to IPPC with a proposal related to a possible Space Task Force.

Tim reported at the Friday meeting (Nov. 3, 2006, 2:00 -3:00 p.m.) on Case Center some remarks by Pat Oles, among them that the decision to close the Spa at night did not go through committees. Tim suggested that the Task Force on Space assist Pat in helping make such decisions.

Bill and Mark suggested that we wait and see how things shake out. Bill noted that the decision about Case was a recent one, and that the whole issue is still in flux. Mark recommended that we should hear from the President's Cabinet about the Space Task Force and whether it should be constituted, before we think about what the Task Force might do. Mark also noted that he sees the issue of academic space as different from the issue of Case Center. Paty noted that any task force should have faculty representation.

3. Visit with Mary Stange on CAFR's proposal for dismissing tenured faculty

Mary Stange, Chair of CAFR, outlined her committee's proposal to replace the current language on the "discipline" of tenured faculty (*Faculty Handbook* Part One, Article X), noting that CAFR means the proposal to be confined strictly to dismissal rather than discipline. Jennifer responded that if dismissal becomes the definitive issue in the *Handbook*, where does discipline go? Paty asked what constitutes cause for dismissal: violation of contract or moral turpitude? If the latter, don't we have some recourse with Herb Crossman in Human Resources? Mary answered that having HR involved is "not working," adding that CAFR is trying to couch cause in terms of "professional fitness" in line with AAUP guidelines. Mehmet expressed a concern that any new procedures should address both discipline and dismissal. Mary invited FEC to help with guidelines on discipline.

Mary explained that CAFR felt strongly that procedures for dismissal involve standing committees rather than special elections. Jennifer noted that the TRB and CAPT only make evaluations in terms of teaching, scholarship, and service — areas likely outside the ostensible grounds for dismissal. She advocated for a special election. Dan C. responded that AAUP guidelines suggest either standing committees or special elections, but that the former were perhaps a better option for a college the size of Skidmore, since it might be difficult to find members of the faculty who are impartial or uninformed about a case. Tim asked what authority FEC might have if used as a board of appeals. Paty said she was uncomfortable with standing committees having to expand their purviews to include matters they do not now include. Mary reiterated that changing operating codes is necessary to provide concrete procedures to protect the rights of faculty, so that the DoF or VPAA cannot fly "under the radar."

Tim had some questions about the current proposal. (1) Is the phrase "status reduced" in paragraph one problematic? (2) Is the notion of an appeal after CAPT and the President have reported their recommendations to the Trustees chronologically correct? (3) What would FEC do, if used as a board of appeal, once it has reached a decision?

Mehmet noted that he agrees with the spirit of the proposal, but not its mechanism. In particular, he is against FEC's involvement in the appeal process, and he asked why the DoF might not hand the case directly to CAFR rather than the TRB. Mary responded by noting CAFR thought it very important to distance itself from the process until the end, so that it might better serve as an appeals committee.

Dan C. thanked Mary for visiting FEC, and promised to follow up with her once the committee has had some time to consider the proposal further, and to come to consensus (if at all possible).

4. Visit with Susan Kress on faculty meetings.

FEC and interim VPAA Susan Kress had a discussion about faculty meetings, both with regard to setting the agenda, and with regard to use of time.

Susan noted that the meeting by-laws (*Handbook* Part Two, section I) allow for agenda items to be submitted up to 24 hours prior to a faculty meeting, which makes sharing the agenda difficult. Tim noted that last Spring Chuck Joseph made concerted efforts to keep the meetings focused on academic issues, and that Tim urged him to distribute materials over which faculty were asked to deliberate well in advance of the meeting. Tim also cited the first faculty meeting of 2005, in which FEC had expected the President to report on the restructuring of the Dean of Studies' office — a report presumed to be on the agenda, but which never materialized at the meeting itself; Mark affirmed this situation of last year as “unfortunate.”

Dan C. talked about making room during the meeting for substantive business. At the last meeting, for example, we managed to have substantial discussion of the CEPP-CAPT motions on ID lines, despite the fact that the meeting moved to New Business after an hour of preliminaries, leaving about a half-hour left for the motions themselves. He noted, however, that the discussion itself was good. Mehmet said that the question of who owns the Faculty Meetings is fundamental to the nature of the meeting. Mehmet also suggested that FEC keep a running list of issues to discuss in the event of no substantive academic business; Susan and Tim noted that CEPP might already have such a list. Susan suggested it might be good once in a while to discuss an issue of national importance from the Skidmore perspective.

Ultimately it was suggested that meetings try to begin on time, and that the reports of the President and VPAA be completed by 4:00 so the meeting can get on to substantive business. It was also agreed that the FEC Chair would continue to play an active role in the formation of the agenda.

On another note, Susan raised the topic of having the VPAA sit on CEPP. FEC agreed that this was a topic worth exploring.

5. Other.

Paty suggested that FEC consider proposing Faculty Trustee(s), such as Muriel Poston had been at her prior institution. Tim expressed interest in this idea.

Mehmet proposed that Muriel be called upon to deliver a report on her vision for the College. Paty suggested as a corollary that she might offer her agenda items for the Faculty. Dan C. noted that Muriel was slated to attend the next FEC-9

meeting in December, and that FEC might wish to discuss the above issues, as well as the VPAA and DoF sitting on CEPP.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Curley, Chair
Faculty Executive Committee.